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the "Angel of God," "the glory of God," "the Apostle of God." He removes the difficulty in sentences like "God repented," "God was angry," by explaining the predicates. Speaking of a similar method of interpretation to the former in the case of the Karaite Benjamin Nahavendi, who flourished in the early part of the ninth century, Graetz says, "Nach acht Jahrhunderten feierte Philo's Logos in Nahavendi's Engel seine Auferstehung."

In conclusion, let us again congratulate Prof. Margoliouth upon his contribution to Semitic and Karaitic literature. The present number of the *Anecdota Oxoniensia* is a worthy sequel to Dr. Neubauer's *Mediaeval Chronicles*."

LAWRENCE M. SIMMONS.

**Rabbi Meir and "Cleopatra."**—(See JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, I., 336, note 1). How to explain the anachronism of Rabbi Meir, who lived in the second century, holding a conversation with the Queen Cleopatra on the subject of the Resurrection (*Sanhedrin*, 90b), I have already suggested in the *Revue des Études Juives*, V., 185 (compare *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, Vol. II., page 68). The words מלכתא קלפטרא are a corruption of פטריקא רכותא, Patriarch of the Cuthæans, *i.e.*, of the Samaritans. In *Genesis Rabbah* (ch. 4, 70, 94), polemical dialogues between R. Meir and Samaritans are recorded; in *Kohleth Rabbah*, 5, 10, a conversation occurs between R. Meir and a Samaritan on the very subject of the resurrection of the dead. In one of these conversations the "Patriarch of the Samaritans" is mentioned; the Samaritan, to whom Meir had demonstrated that he was not a descendant of Joseph, goes to complain on the subject, לגבי אפטוריקי דיריהון, that is to say, to their Patriarch.

W. BACHER.

**Translation of the Talmud in England in 1568?**—The library of the late Dr. Löwe contains so many invaluable treasures of Oriental literature, that a full description of them would fill a small volume. As is well known, Dr. Löwe himself was an Oriental student of a very high rank, but the fact that he was the friend and confidant of Sir Moses Montefiore, whom he accompanied through his travels in the East, gave him also the opportunity of collecting many rare books and manuscripts, which any great library would be proud to possess. I shall here only draw the attention of the reader to a work seemingly insignificant, but, nevertheless, of great interest both to the bibliographer and the historian. The title of this work is לחם הפנים, containing a translation of certain parts of the *Shulchan Aruch* into the Spanish-Jewish dialect (Ladino) by one Meir. It was published in the printing offices of Joseph Jabez, at Salonica, in the year 1568, and re-published in Italy during the seventeenth century. (See Steinschneider's Catalogue, col. 1687). Hitherto the Salonica edition was known only through one copy in the possession of the British Museum, and it is

marked in Zedner's Catalogue (p. 335) with the words "No other copy known." We have thus at present two copies of this rare work. There occurs also a curious statement in the Hebrew preface, which is worth pointing out here, though it was already referred to by Steinschneider. Apologising for his rendering special Jewish matters into a profane language, the author says that "already, many years before, somebody has translated many Ritual Laws from the *Turim* into a secular language (לע"ז), of which copies were sent to the Marannos, in Flanders (פלאנדריש)

. . . . And as I have also heard that in England (or Angleteria באינגל טירה) *the Gentiles are now printing the Talmud in Latin*, and we also know that most (Hebrew) books which are now printed in Italy are carried away to Padua, Paris, and Salamanca, and other Gentile places, both books on the Law and commentaries, not to speak of Cabbalistic books."

I am unable to tell on what facts this rumour about the translation of the Talmud in England as early as 1568 could have been founded; all the great Hebraists we know of, as Selden, Pocock, etc., belonged to the seventeenth century. But I hope this note may be read by some specialist, who will set us on the right clue.

S. SCHECHTER.

"**Bestemm.**"—The Jewish-German jargon is a museum of curiosities and antiquities gathered from all lands and seas. As a conqueror leaves behind him in the ground coins which mark his devastating track, so the various civilisations have left their impress on the Jewish intellectual life and its popular language. And thus the history which a word has to tell us is, frequently, a more faithful and persistent memorial than stones and documents. Such a record of a sorrowful portion of Jewish history I discovered in a Jewish-German term, whose original home, though one would hardly credit it, was Venice. Any one desirous of cursing heartily in the jargon employs a single word to express all kinds of suffering and trouble—Bestemm. This term is used as a noun, and occurs in the phrase "to give one Bestemm," which expresses the intensest exasperation.

It is the old word for Blasphemia and Blasphemiare, which appear in the disguised form Bestemmia and Bestemmiare. The form "blastemare" was the intermediate stage through which the word passed before it reached its present form. On an ancient Christian window in the Netherlands we find under a representation of Job Blaspheming, the words IOB BLASTEMA.<sup>1</sup> From this to *Bestemmia* is but a single step. Our business here, however, is not to trace the well-known etymology of the word, but rather to show the way through which it passed into the Jewish popular dialect. That way leads us to Venice, where a judicial Court existed, with the special function of trying cases of Bestemmia. It did not always confine itself to the examination of real charges of blasphemy.<sup>2</sup> Every one is aware of the alarming proportions which the system of denunciation attained at Venice. Nothing was easier than to be summoned before this tribunal, whose cruel methods of examination

<sup>1</sup> See Fr. H. Kraus, *Roma Sotteranea*, 289, 5.

<sup>2</sup> See *Hebraische Bibliographie* VI., page 65, note 4.